

10 June 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Christine Dodson
Staff Secretary
National Security Council

SUBJECT : Comments on Your Memo of 4 June re ☐ Report
Implementation

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1. First let me say that, in dealing with this rather difficult problem, I endorse your efforts and wish you luck.

2. Based on what you have outlined in your memorandum, I still have some nagging concerns:

a. Re Agendas.

You note that the agendas are to be prepared by the agency responsible for the meeting and they are to be farmed out to participating agencies no later than 48 hours before the meeting. If this, in fact, becomes practice it may be fine; however, I am still of the opinion that a meeting is not going to be called unless someone has an idea of what is to be discussed. Therefore, I would submit that an agenda (no matter how tentative, and with the appropriate caveats that it might be subject to change) can and should be transmitted to participating agencies at the time a meeting is called. Such an agenda can be modified, as required, as development of papers, etc. ensue. Essentially what I am saying is that there usually is some coordination, at least at the working level, which determines a meeting is necessary, and therefore there should be enough sense of what the meeting is about, before it is called, in order to produce an agenda.

b. Re Tasking.

Given the uncertainties with which you must deal with re the minutes, Summaries of Conclusions and any subsequent tasking memoranda, I think you have dealt with the formal record as best you can. I would encourage you, however, to make every effort to work with Les to get these back as soon as possible. I do see one pitfall, however, and this

regards your mention that "a responsible NSC Staff member will consult informally with the other agency representatives to be certain there is agreement on the agenda for the next meeting and the basic taskings." As you are aware, in our case, there are often different components, either within the Agency or within the Community, who might have to deal with a PRC/SCC agenda item. It has been my experience that the NSC staffer may not be aware (nor need he be) of which office we will assign responsibility for any given agenda item. This limitation often pertains equally to whatever person the NSC staffer chooses to contact. Therefore I would suggest that, if the NSC staffer, through his informal conversations or by whatever means, arrives at some initial tasking and/or determines a subsequent agenda, that this be provided you for informal distribution to the contact points in the agencies. In this way I can ensure not only that everyone that needs to be aware is so informed, but also that the appropriate action can be undertaken in a timely fashion.

3. I don't know whether my above comments are useful or whether they can be factored in to your standard procedures but I would appreciate your giving them consideration. As I have noted above, I think this is a worthwhile undertaking, and I will keep my fingers crossed that a set of procedures will emerge that can be adhered to as a rule rather than as an exception.



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